Mr. MERRILL's

ELECTION SERMON,

OCTOBER 9th, 1806.

Archives
P
Merrill, T.

In GENERAL ASSEMBLY, October 10th, 1806.

ON motion of Mr. *Hendee*,

RESOLVED, That a committee of three be appointed to wait on the Rev. THOMAS A. MERRILL, present to him the thanks of the House for his ELECTION SERMON, delivered yesterday, and request a copy of the same for the Press.

Members chosen, Messrs. *Byrd*, *Hendee*, and *Clapp*.

Extract from the Journals,

Attest. M. POST, *Clerk.*

AN

ELECTION SERMON.

I. TIMOTHY, IV. 8.

GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE FOR ALL THINGS.

GOD is the supreme architect. This world is a vast building, which he has fitly framed and joined together. Mankind are stewards to whom he assigns the different apartments of this building to be occupied in their various employments—To the husbandman the province of felling the forest, and tilling the earth—to the merchant the no less arduous and anxious employment of transporting, at the risk of winds and storms, the redundencies of one country to supply the exigencies of another. To devise forms of government, to frame systems of jurisprudence, and enforce the salutary restrictions of law, is the business of the politician, the legislator and the magistate.

But the province of the divine is to inculcate the importance of fearing God and keeping his commandments, as the whole object, business, and duty of man. He, who stands as the messenger of truth, must declare both to the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the wise and the ignorant, to the most obscure citizen, and to him, who wears the robes of magistracy, the necessity and the advantages of godliness.

The text calls our attention particularly to the *advantages* of godliness. "Godliness," saith the sacred penman directed by inspiration, "is profitable for all things." The christian religion has an advantage over all other religions, from the consideration of the authority with which it is announced, the purity of its sentiments, and the happy effects it produces in a community. To say nothing of the prophecies, which have been fulfilled to vouch for the truth of the scriptures—to say nothing of the miracles, which have been wrought, altogether unlike those tricks of legerdemain, by which deceivers have imposed false religions,—to say nothing of its eminence above all other religions, in point of reasonableness, consistency and purity, let us confine ourselves to the effects, which it is calculated to produce on society.

"Godliness is profitable for all things." This may be evinced,

First, From the nature of religion and,

Secondly, From the dealings of providence with nations.

THESE heads I shall treat in their order, with plainness of speech, by adverting to those reflections only which naturally arise from the subject.

First, The advantages of godliness are manifest from the very nature of religion.

GODLINESS implies a reverential sense of the perfections of the Deity—a rejoicing in him, as altogether worthy to sway the sceptre of universal dominion, and a cordial resignation to become an obedient subject in his kingdom. It consists neither in cold philosophical belief, nor in wild unaccountable rapture. Though it require knowledge in the understanding and devotion in the heart, it is equally remote from the inactive demonstration of the theorist and the visionary trances of the enthusiast. By Godliness, man is assimilated to the Deity. Yet he never so far loses himself in contemplating, admiring and praising the Creator, as to forget the relation he holds to his creatures. He obeys one precept—"love God with all thy heart," and equally obeys the other, "love thy neighbor as thyself."

"AND whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them." Here is a summary of practical godliness. This precept is a pearl of great price. It has so much divinity in it, that all the wisdom of the pagan world for four thousand years never could discover anything which resembled it.

We cannot duly estimate the effects of godliness without considering it in relation to the different classes of society. It is calculated to produce the most happy effects in *prosperity*, and *adversity*—in *youth*, and *old age*.

Is any one highly elated with an uninterrupted train of *prosperous* events, and in the ambition of his heart still aspiring at higher attainments? Religion is calculated to cool the fire of his ambition, to give him a serenity of mind in the midst of the whirl of business, to teach him the instability of earthly things, the frailty of his own frame, the vanity of worldly enjoyments and the importance of laying up a treasure, "where moth and rust doth not corrupt."

Has any one been reached by the arrows of *misfortune* and ready to sit down in despondency? Religion will pour "oil and balm" into his wounds, and afford him a few beams of consolation through the dark cloud of adversity. In the midst of all real or apprehended danger, "the name of the Lord is a strong tower, into which the righteous," can run and be "safe."

The impetuous *youth* from an overfondness of being seen and known, often rushes without reflection upon a world, which is severe to criticise but cold to applaud. From his inexperience, and the precipitancy, which usually attends young genius, he becomes rash and imprudent in his measures, sullies his reputation, and oftimes, in

stead of attaining the object of his ambition, sinks into disrepute. Religion checks the ardor and impetuosity of the youth, counsels, cautions, advises and leads him in the path of reputation and usefulness to the goal where he receives those laurels, which will not fade and that "crown of glory," which no rival will take from him.

THE happy effects of religion are seen in a most singular measure, when the "lamp of life" begins to grow dim. When "the strong men bow themselves and those that look out at the windows are darkened"—when "the almond tree" begins to "flourish, the grasshopper becomes a burden and desire faileth" then "godliness produces contentment and great gain." This is a season, when gold loses its lustre, the temple of fame its magnificence, and the objects of sense their charms. But when all the objects of sense appear but vanity of vanities, religion administers its comforts. It alleviates the distresses of declining life, and animates the soul with the prospect of those joys, which are "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fade not away."

BUT to drop these reflections and numerous others of a similar nature, let us consider the subject in a *national view*. "Godliness is profitable for all things," and in all circumstances of life; but more especially in a national view, when considered in relation to its effects on a *family*,—on the *citizen*,—and on the *magistrate*.*

* The word *magistrate* in this discourse is applied to an officer in either of the departments of government, without any scrupulousness of enquiry with respect to *legal precision*.

A *family* is a little community. Though it be the smallest in society, it is by no means the least important. For the proper regulation of families is the centre pillar, which supports the political dome. Take away this pillar, especially in a republic, and the fabric so much admired will tumble to ruins.

Writers on domestic happiness often essentially mistake their object by dwelling too much on *great things*; whereas the felicities of life consist principally in *small ones*—in things too trifling for remark, which take place in a man's own house, or the accidental occurrencies of the little village, where providence has cast his lot.

Writers again on national happiness say too much respecting *great things*. Elevated with the idea that they are writing for nations, they forget that they are writing for men. Not considering that national happiness is but the collective happiness of individuals, they neglect to tell a man how he may be happy in himself, and discourse at large on forms of government, arts, commerce, full treasuries, equal administration of justice, peace abroad and tranquility at home. Whereas all these things result, in a measure, from a healthy state of society. And this again is usually the fruit of well regulated families.

The value of religion on heads of families will be manifest, when their influence on the rising generation is du-

ly considered. By our parents we are taught what is right and what is wrong. Here we learn the difference between vice and virtue; and the importance of respecting and practising the one and detesting and refraining from the other. Here we are taught the necessity of subordination; or left to believe it a dictate of religion, that "every man do that which is right in his own eyes." We learn almost from our cradles to decide on forms of government, and are often too tenacious of youthful prejudices even in old age. Here again we learn to hate kings, or that slavish doctrine that *kings can do no wrong.* It is from our parents that we catch the sparks of patriotism, which reflection enkindles into a flame that burns all our lives. From our parents we take our national prejudices, and from them we take our private prejudices. They are capable of instilling corrupt, disorganizing, licentious principles, or teaching servile submission to popes and tyrants; or again of inculcating the milder virtues, and those more rational sentiments of respect to the wise and virtuous, deference to age and experience, hatred of every thing that is base; and those notions of liberty, which respect the magistrate, especially in elective governments, without forgetting the privileges of the citizen, which are equally remote from fanning the flame of every popular discontent, and a tame obedience and humble approbation of whatever may be desired by the powers that rule.

In fine we are, in a great degree, in a political view, what our parents make us. For the principles imbibed in youth usually "grow with our growth and strengthen with our strength." Though the probverb has become trite by repetition there is much truth in it,

"Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclin'd."

How desirable then is it that parents should be governed by that godliness, which seeketh not her own, and that they teach it to their children. How necessary, in a *political view* that they rule their houshold in the fear of God, "as those that must give account," at the tribunal of Jehovah, for the principles they instil into the minds of their children.

Let but the principles of godliness prevail in a family, and if happiness have not become a fugitive and fled from the earth there you will find it. You will see, in the heads of the family, acts of mutual tenderness, mutual kindness, mutual forgiveness. You will see children affectionate, reverent, obedient. You will see strictness without severity, and mildness without laxness—parental fondness without childish weakness, and filial respect without slavish fear. You will find the happiness of each member not only connected with, but actually consisting in, the happiness of the rest.

Very little need be said to shew the beneficial effects of godliness in relation to *the citizen*. It has long been re-

ceived, that the main spring in a despotic government is fear, in a monarchy honor, but in a republic virtue. And it was an observation of one of our political fathers, whose maxims like the beams of the setting sun shed forth light on the world after he has taken his departure, that "liberty cannot exist without public virtue, nor public virtue without religion."

LAWS will have an effect in restraining the vices of a people. But "human justice hath no power over the passions and desires of the heart," and the legislator with all his wisdom must submit to behold his system imperfect. He has no power to curb the passions and repress the secret devising of mischief till they have acted themselves out and the mischief been committed. But the godliness, which Christ has inculcated, is not content with cutting off the shoots of these noxious plants. It destroys them in the bud, and not only so, but prevents them from budding.

REMOVE the restraints of religion, and a fear of retribution from an avenging God, and what will prevent a depraved heart, under the mantle of secrecy, from stealing, robbing, murdering, and committing those crimes, which the darkness of midnight would blush to witness? Take away the dread of offending Jehovah and a fear of future retribution, and how many would betray their country, as Judas did his Savior, for thirty pieces of silver.

It is the exalted privilege of a free people to elect their own rulers. When governed by the benign religion of the Prince of Peace, so far from "using their liberty as a cloak of maliciousness," they will "look out" men of known wisdom, approved integrity and acknowledged zeal for the public good. But if the state of society become corrupt, where civil officers are elected by *free suffrage*, the consequence will be corrupt rulers and corrupt laws; so that the restraints upon open wickedness are liable to be removed, and such abomination of debauchery, obscenity and human butchery, as Rome and Sparta have witnessed, is liable to receive the sanction of law.

He, who regulates his conduct by the rules of policy and reputation, will be virtuous in virtuous times. But when vice has become popular, by spreading its contagion through all classes of society, there is nothing but a reverence of nature's God, which can prevent him from turning traitor against his country and immolating his patriotism on the altar of pride or sensuality.

The beneficial effects of godliness on the magistrate cannot be questioned. Magistrates are very properly styled the fathers of the people and the guardians of their rights and liberties. Even in republics, where their field is somewhat defined by constitutions, there is much discretionary ground. And so long as this field is sufficiently extensive to effect any national good, they can effect

much national evil. How important therefore is it that they be such men, as will be influenced by the spirit of godliness—who, in the language of Isaiah, "will not take a bribe and turn aside the poor from his right"—such men, that when they assemble, they fear God, and hold hold themselves responsible to God and their constituents, to divest themselves of private feelings and local prejudices, and adopt those measures, which will most advance the good of Zion, and the great interest of the nation.

By the constitutions of this country it appears, that our politicians have been awake to the danger of legislative abuse of power. Hence the requirement of oaths as a part of official qualification. But, if the candidates for office, are not governed by the fear of God, the administration of oaths is a solemn farce. Notwithstanding the sacredness of the design, they lose their meaning and become the mere ceremony of the day. A faithful magistrate under the oath of office will feel as much bound by duty to God, while enacting laws or giving decisions from the bench, as the divine, when enforcing from the desk the doctrines of "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come." If he is solicited from the path of duty, by any private feelings, by any expectation of emolument, or by any fear of losing his reputation, his influence, or his office, the reply with him at once is—"how can I do this great evil, and sin against God."

Divest a man of every religious principle, and he is left to pursue the selfish schemes, which his ambition may project. Without a spirit of godliness, even in debates on national questions of moment, what shall prevent the magistrate, who thirsts for reputation from rather regarding the applause of the galleries, or the celebrity of his speech from a public herald, than the happiness of his constituents and the dignity and glory of his nation. Or if his ambition be for power what shall hinder him, by one pretence and another, from encroaching gradually on the rights of a people, till all their power is virtually wrested from them, and their liberties have vanished into an empty name.

If a magistrate be duly influenced by the spirit of godliness and feel a responsibility, not only to his constituents, but to almighty God for the faithful discharge of duty, the injunction of Jehoshaphat upon the rulers of Israel will press with weight on his mind. "Take heed what you do for you judge not only for man but for the Lord, who is with you in judgment." Knowing that as he judges so he must be judged, he will not dare receive the rich man's bribe and oppress the poor in their poverty. Sensible he is placed like a "city set on an hill," and that those, who through confidence have raised him to office, are prone to imitate his example—his excellencies, his foibles and his vices, he will hold himself bound to act with all circumspection. His deportment will be such, that the virtuous will esteem it their privilege to

approach him, while the vicious shrink abashed from his presence. So far from smiling upon vice, or dallying with corruption he holds them the object of his utter abhorrence.

Is he a legislator? He will not consult the wishes of the licentious in framing laws.

Is he a judge? He will not fear the most energetic measures for carrying the law into execution. He will so blend firmness with humanity, as to steer equally clear of oppression on the one hand and false lenity on the other the Scylla and Charybdis to which a judge is exposed. In view of the equity and *uniformity* of his decisions, "the wicked will flee like a timorous hart, and the righteous become bold as a lion."

The upright magistrate will keep in view that great day of impartial retribution, when the monarch and the beggar must stand at the same tribunal, and judgment be administered without "respect of persons:" When no question will be asked respecting a man's circumstances in life, whether he had been applauded or despised, a king or a peasant, a conqueror of the world or a menial servant: But whether he acted in all good conscience and faithfully discharged his duties to his friends, to his country and his God.

If farther evidence of the advantages of godliness were necessary it might be argued,

Secondly, Agreeably to what was proposed, from the dealings of Providence with nations. Though the doctrine of a national providence is by many doubted, and by some disputed, abundant evidence can be adduced to establish it both from scripture and history. The word of God abounds with gracious promises and dreadful denunciations—the one to national virtue and the other for national corruption. "Blessed is the nation, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." And again, "woe unto them for they have fled from me, destruction unto them for they have transgressed against me." "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the fat of the land, but, if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

But not to multiply scripture declarations, let us instance in the history of the Jews. Worn out with labor at the brick kilns of Egypt, they cry unto the Lord. He heard them; and notwithstanding the superior force of their enemies, and the seas and mountains and rivers, which obstructed their passage, he led them by divers miracles, "with a mighty hand and stretched out arm," to a country, which abounded not only in the necessaries but the delicacies of life. In addition to all this, they received the promise from God, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant,

then shall ye be a peculiar treasure to me above all people." To these promises was annexed the solemn declaration, " but it shall come to pass, that if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments, that the Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly, because of the wickedness of thy doings whereby thou hast forsaken me."

To shew that God verified his promises and declarations, it may be observed, that the whole history of the Jews, during the presidency of their judges and the reign of their kings, was, on the one hand, a scene of backslidings and returns, and on the other, a series of judgments and mercies. But at length their degeneracy became so great, that that devoted nation brought down upon themselves all the curses, which were written in the law and the prophets. Isaiah testifies, that " except the Lord of Hosts had left a small remnant, they had been as Sodom and like unto Gomorrha." The few, who did not perish were scattered abroad over the four quarters of the globe to be no longer a nation, and that magnificent city, which had been the admiration of the world, was rased to the ground so that " one stone was not left upon another." All this befel them, in the language of the psalmist, " because they rebelled against the words of God and contemned the council of the Most High." Therefore " he

brought down their heart with labor. They fell down and there was none to help."

But if, through the unexampled form of their theocratic government, Israel should not be admitted, as parallel with other nations, nevertheless empires and kingdoms have been successively overturned with such obvious direction to some point, there cannot be a doubt, but that "the Lord reigneth" and "governeth among the nations"—that he planteth one and plucketh up another at his pleasure—and that he overruleth in such a manner, as to reward the virtuous and punish the wicked in a national as well as individual capacity. National judgments and national mercies—pestilence and famine, plenty and want, peace and war are subject to his direction, and he sendeth them at his pleasure, as blessings on the nations, that fear the Lord, and scourges on those that call not on his name.

The declaration of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah is general, and not limited to any particular country. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation to pluck up and pull down and destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will turn from the evil that I thought to do unto it. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, whereby I said I would benefit them."

These truths are not only inserted in the scriptures, but they are, if I may so speak, in the nature of things. For when the state of society becomes corrupt, the nerves of government relaxed, justice partially administered, the motive to industry taken away, and virtue and vice meet the same reward, the subject loses his respect for the government and his love to his country. In these circumstances he would rather invite a revolution, than use any efforts to prevent it. And even though a nominal patriotism, which was rather the effect of pride than attachment, and the authority of a disrespected government might induce him into the field, still he has so little to lose by defeat, and so little to gain by conquest, that his efforts would be rather the pusillanimous struggles of a mercenary, than the daring bravery of a patriot.

Where has been a nation on the globe, which has been able to withstand a torrent of venality bribery and corruption. These things enervated the victorious army of Cyrus, dismembered the empire of Alexander and brought down the colossal power of Greece at the foot of Roman ambition. Rome in her turn became arbitress of the world and combined the world against her. All they could accomplish was like the ineffectual roaring of the tempest against the sides of Mount Ætna. But venality and corruption was the fire within her bowels, which shook her to her very centre. It is needless to instance in modern Europe. Through the prevalence of vice some nations are now sinking, others have been dis-

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membered, or long since sunk into oblivion. The pages of history afford swift witness to these declarations. National corruption is the prophetic language of national dissolution, and a language which has uniformly been verefied by subsequent fact.

When I say that "godliness is profitable for all things," and urge the importance of religion, I mean the religion of the scriptures and not that, which is of man's devising—the religion which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated," and not that, which like the religion of the Koran arms the subject with the implements of torture and bloodshed to exterminate all, who will not implicitly embrace it—the religion, which is the voluntary expression of a benevolent heart and approved by an unrestrained conscience, and not that which is imposed by popes and cardinals, with the terrors of an inquisition. The religion of compulsion is but a base substitute for religion and is so far from being profitable in a national view, that it has occasioned the overthrow of some of the strongest powers of Europe and reduced others to a mere cypher in the political world.

If we wish for further evidence of the advantages of godliness *from the dealings of providence with nations*, instead of turning back to the pages of ancient history and ransacking the archives of Europe, let us revert to the history of our own nation. The causes are various,

which have induced mankind to undergo the fatigues of setling a new country. *A thirst for gold* led the Pizarros and Cortes to Mexico and Peru. The *superabundant population* of Tyre occasioned Dido to become a fugitive, and found a Carthage in the wilds of Africa. An *ambition for fame* laid the basis of the Roman empire. But the colonies of North America alone were settled by those, who fled to a wilderness, without motives of ambition, to seek an *asylum for the worship of their God.* The same impolitic acts of intolerance, which occasioned Moses to be cast out by the proud and jealous monarch of Egypt, induced England to cruelly thrust from her bosom a great number of her most virtuous citizens. Esteeming the ruthless tomahawk of the savage less to be dreaded than the arm of civil oppression, with full confidence in the God of Heaven they boldly ventured across the mighty deep. And though they could literally adopt the language of the apostle as expressive of their danger—"in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by their own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in the wilderness and among false brethren," the God who rescued Israel from the oppression of the Pharaohs, sent them deliverance. When our fathers had survived these distresses and deemed the shackles of slavery to have been shaken off, the British monarch grown insolent by conquest, and priding himself in his fleets and his armies, determined to pursue them into the wilderness and oppress them. But relying on the power, which delivered them "in six troubles yea even in seven," they boldly took the

field, vanquished their foes, plucked a garland from the crown of a tyrant and engrafted it in the tree of liberty.

We deem it unnecessary to take a historical view of our country. The candid will undoubtedly concede, that our national existence, our liberties, our happy form of government and the rank we hold among the nations of the earth are to be ascribed to the religion, the virtue and the patriotism of our fathers.

In fine, whether we consider the *nature of religion*, or the *dealings of providence with nations* we have the most abundant proof of the advantages of godliness. "Righteousness" alone "exalteth a nation. And sin is" not only "a reproach" but will prove a scourge "to any people."

We see therefore how desirable it is as we value our liberties and respect our national character, that the law of kindness be written on all our hearts. And that not merely divines and moralists, but citizens and magistrates, who have any love to their country, inculcate, practice and teach to their children the necessity and advantages of that godliness, which alone can make a nation *great, secure* and *happy*.

The audience will permit me to embrace this opportunity of congratulating them on the return of another *anniversary election*. That body which we respect, as our political fathers and the guardians of our rights and liber-

ties is again convened. We hope for every thing from them, which will enhance our private happiness and conduce to our prosperity as a state.

THE active part, which his excellency the GOVERNOR has taken in the political concerns of this rising republic, evidences a deep interest in its welfare. The language of eulogy is always too gross for a delicate ear. Let it however be observed, the important posts assigned him, especially his frequent re-election by the suffrages of the people to the first office in the state, more clearly evince the approbation, attachment and respect of the great body of his constituents, than any sentiments, which can be expressed in a public discourse. It is hoped that his exertions will be unremitted; and every measure, which is promotive of peace and good order, and tends to suppress vice and encourage virtue, will meet his warmest approbation.

So long as he evinces himself the mild energetic magistrate, who *blends firmness with humanity*—so long as he equally respects the laws of the state, and the liberties of his constituents, and proves himself the patron of science and the friend and protector of "pure and undefiled religion"—in fine, so long as he exhibits the character of the faithful and patriotic GOVERNOR, a numerous and brave people will have reason to rejoice in his administration and in the great day of account "to rise up and call

him blessed." For this purpose we wish him divine light to illuminate his understanding, and divine love to warm his heart. So that when the "cords, which bind him to the earth" shall be cut asunder, and the house of this tabernacle dissolved, he may rise to a seat in the New Jerusalem, with the animating reflection of a life spent in the service of his country, for the good of mankind, and the glory of God.

We trust his Honor the Lieutenant Governor, the gentlemen of the Council and of the House of Representatives will feel the responsibility of their stations. To point out the objects of legislation from the *desk* would be rather a misplaced effort. An *assembly* selected from the different parts of the state know what needs to be done. By accepting their offices they give their constituents a claim upon every thing, which their wisdom can effect.

This section of the United States is rapidly increasing in numbers, and in the opinion of those, who have more means of judging than the speaker, the state of society has much improved and is continually improving. Our *magistrates* can do much, both in their individual and official capacity, to remedy whatever is defective. Their influence and the power entrusted to their hands are very great. It is hoped their measures will be such as to convince the people, that confidence has not been misplaced.

It is hoped they will individually be able to say with the Roman orator, "When I was elected to office, I considered that dignity not as a gratuity conferred upon myself for my particular use, but as a *depositum* entrusted to my vigilance and fidelity. I felt bound to act as if all eyes had been turned upon me—as if my person and administration were exhibited as a spectacle to the view of all the world."

While magistrates are considering the solemnity of the station assigned them by the people and the influence their measures will have on the peace and happiness of society, they do well to look forward and bear in mind that they legislate not only for the present generation, but for generations, who are yet to come on to the stage. It has been said that *the art of government consists in not governing too much.* This is proper language to address a despot or a king. But, let it be observed, it is equally dangerous in a republic to hold the reigns of government with too slack a hand.

Our legislators undoubtedly feel interested for the welfare of the state. And it is to be hoped their wisdom will direct them to such measures, that they shall never become a praise "to evil doers and a" terror "to them that do well." Being sensible of the *advantages of godliness*, it is hoped, agreeably to the spirit and letter of our constitution, they will use all endeavors to promote it, which

are consistent with liberty of conscience and the rights of the people. It is hoped in all their deliberations, they will themselves be influenced by a spirit of godliness, and that they will act uniformly in view of eternity, as acconntable not to their constituents alone, but to Almighty God, by whom they also must be judged.

We wish them the blessing of Israel's God, the satisfaction, which arises from a zeal for the public good and the final approbation of him, who receives his faithful stewards with "well done, enter into the joy of your Lord."

This numerous *audience* will suffer me to remind them of their privileges and their obligations. Your privileges as a people are great. There is not a nation on the globe which has not reason to envy your lot. Is there a discontented citizen? Let him visit Europe, Asia and Africa, and he will return a patriot. Banish all feelings inconsistent with godliness, and let all hearts unite this day to burn incense with devout fervor on the altar of freedom.

"*Oh liberty! sweet liberty inspires*
And keeps alive his pure but noble fires,
Patient of constitutional controul,
He bears it with meek manliness of soul."

But while our hearts are filled with joy and gladness, let us consider there is an instability in earthly things.

The republics of antiquity and the republics of modern time, where shall we find them! Though our citizens are rugged as the mountains they inhabit, without public virtue we must expect to share the fate of former republics. While therefore "some trust in horses and some in chariots of war," let us cleave to the Lord our God.—Though magistrates, who are governed by a spirit of godliness can do much, nevertheless they are insufficient to save a people from ruin who are "set to do evil in the sight of the Lord."

But while we urge the importance of godliness in a *political view*, let us consider, it has "the promise of the life that now is and of "*that which is to come.*" This world is but the commencement of our existence. Brethren, we live for eternity. We are stewards of our divine master, who hath sent us into the vineyard of this world to do his work. Death will soon remove us from probationary ground.

"*The grave great teacher to a level brings,*
Heroes and beggars, galley slaves and kings."

Let us therefore have our "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." So that "when the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, the elements melt with fervent heat and the earth with the works thereof be" consumed, we may be admitted to those "new heavens and new earth," where there will

be no more strife, where the kingdoms of this world will be swallowed up in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and where we shall be employed in hymning the praises of Redeeming Grace forever and ever.

AMEN.